

Fundamental Evangelistic Association

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Tracts and Literature

To Help You Reach the Lost, Grow In Christ, and Sound a Faithful Warning

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MODERN BIBLES

the Dark Secret - Part 2

by Pastor Jack Moorman©
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VI. THE THEORY BEHIND THE SHORTER BIBLES

Are words missing from the Modern Bibles or have they been added to the Authorized Version? This is the question that must now be asked! Have words been deleted, either intentionally or accidentally from the text underlying the Modern Versions, or have they been somehow added to the text of the King James Version?

Scholars who favour the newer translations have had a ready answer for this question, "Conflation." They've said the King James text conflated or combined readings of the different "text types" or manuscript groupings. For example, if in a certain passage, one group of manuscripts reads "Peter walked by the sea," but another "John walked by the sea"; the manuscripts which form the basis of the Received Text merely combined the two, "Peter and John walked by the sea." This has been the standard explanation for the Received Text's greater length. But, as is now known, conflation cannot begin to offer any such explanation, and today textual scholars are reluctant to appeal to it.

Conflation is but one aspect of what is known as - ***The Westcott and Hort Theory***. Last century about the time when Darwin was trying to show how there could be a creation without a Creator, two Cambridge professors, B.F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort built up an elaborate argument in favour of the shorter text and

against the Received Text. Others before had labored to the same end, but Westcott and Hort developed the various facets into a powerful and plausible argument. Their theory of the New Testament text has dominated the views of Bible translators this century. But what is so remarkable: its major tenets have been disproven or diminished by scholars and yet still appealed to by them. Textual Criticism has reached a blind alley with little left to argue the point. One thing has become obvious, they seem no more likely to return to the KJV type of text than an evolutionist whose theories have also been disproven would come back to the Genesis account of creation. Textual critics merely continue to cleave to, and attempt to rehabilitate the wreckage of the Westcott and Hort theory.

Opponents of the Authorized Version have had a very big task on their hands. They must explain the dominance and uniformity of the Traditional/KJV Text. About 90% of known manuscripts fall into this category, and they are strongly cohesive. Further, they must describe the means by which it "became longer."

Here then are the major points of the Westcott and Hort Theory:

One: "In matters of textual criticism the Bible is to be treated like any other ancient book. No special considerations are to be made concerning its claims of inspiration and preservation."

To approach the Scriptures with anything less than the greatest reverence and respect is a reproach to its Author! God has committed Himself to His Book in its inspiration, preservation, and transmission. Textual scholars and translators who have not taken this into account have made a fatal error which reveals itself only too readily in the product.

Two: "Because of their age (mid fourth century), the primary basis of the Greek text is to be found in the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts."

These two well preserved manuscripts contain most of the New Testament. Vaticanus has for centuries been in the Vatican library, while Sinaiticus, which was discovered last century in a monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai, is on display at the British Museum. They exhibit the shorter text and are the chief reason for the new versions being shorter. They are corrupted by Adoptionism. They, with a few allies, constitute the main pillars of the modern Critical Greek Text. They are continually referred to in footnotes as the "oldest and best manuscripts." They are old but certainly not the best! Their great age and good condition can only point to disuse by the early church. How else could they be in such remarkably good condition? We have very little evidence of copies being made from them in subsequent centuries. The comparatively few manuscripts which also exhibit the shorter text frequently disagree with them in other particulars. In fact, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree between themselves over 3000 times in the four Gospels alone. The source of this shorter text seems certain to have been Alexandria, Egypt, and it did not spread and become an accepted text outside of that area. These two primary representatives of the Alexandrian Text remained in their places of disuse for the better part of the Christian era only to be retrieved last century to form the basis of the Modern Bibles.

Three: "Despite its numerical advantage, the Received or Byzantine Text (as it is called) is merely one of three or four competing text types."

This was the great "leveler" used by textual critics when faced with the overwhelming numbers of the Received Text. Rather than view manuscripts on a 90 to 10 ratio (that is 90 for the Received and 10 for the others), the Received Text was made merely one of several competing families. The others being said to be the Alexandrian, Western and possibly the Caesarean.

Now for a start, to divide ten percent of the remaining manuscripts among three textual groupings, shows how small each would be. Today it is admitted that because of their lack of uniformity the Western and Caesarean can no longer be regarded as text types. This leaves the Received and Alexandrian. And the Alexandrian is very small as the following shows:

(1) There are 88 papyri fragments (2nd, 3rd centuries). Many are too fragmentary to show whether they support the longer or shorter text; coming as they do from the Alexandria area we would expect them to support the latter. Scholars such as Fredrick Kenyon usually single out between nine and thirteen in support of the Alexandrian Text. But, as shown below, the papyri also supports the AV Text.

(2) There are 267 uncial or large-lettered manuscripts (4th-10th centuries). Advocates of the Alexandrian Text claim support from only about nine.

(3) There are 2401 minuscule or small-lettered manuscripts (10th-16th centuries). Supporters of the shorter text are prepared to list only about twenty-two for their side. Thus the Alexandrian manuscripts comprise only a small fraction of those discovered. Further there is wide variation among them; far more so than the great mass of manuscripts which comprise the Received Text. We are actually being quite generous to give as many as 40 manuscripts to the Alexandrian side, for frequently they display the shorter text in only a portion of a manuscript. There is in fact only one cohesive text type; that which underlies the King James Version. Most of what remains is total confusion! We are bound to ask: If the shorter Alexandrian Text used in the modern Bibles is the true one, why did the early church make so few and widely variant copies?

Four: "The numerical preponderance of the Received Text can be explained by a study of the genealogical descent of its manuscripts. If, for example, of ten manuscripts, nine agree against one, but the nine have a common original, the numerical advantage counts for nothing. It is merely one to one."

This was the classic argument W/H used to deny the Received Text any preference on the basis of numbers. The argument implies that many of the Received Text manuscripts are but copies of each other or of near ancestors. Surprisingly, W/H merely theorized at this point, they did not present actual data of parent-to-child and ancestral relationships between manuscripts. Research since W/H has shown that the great mass of Received Text manuscripts are not "mimeographed" copies; very few have a parent-child relationship. Instead they are individual representatives of lines of transmission which go deep into the past.

Five: "The Received Text is fuller due to conflation. It combined the variant readings of other competing text types (usually the Western and Alexandrian). Rather than choose between one or the other, both were used. Much of this took the form of an official revision sanctioned by the Byzantine Church probably under the leadership of Lucan (died 311 A.D.) bishop of Antioch."

If this were true, then most of the underlined KJV passages in our lists which have been omitted from the modern version-should in fact be combinations of material from existing text types. Yet a search of the Alexandrian and Western texts in these passages reveals that there is seldom enough material for the Received Text to make such a conflation. Thus, wherever the unique KJV readings came from, it most certainly was not from that source. This is clearly the reason why Westcott and Hort, who were long on theory but short on demonstration, presented only eight "examples" of conflation. And frankly, the eight are not very convincing. To make conflation the reason for the greater length of the KJV would require virtually thousands of clear instances.

Coming to the second part of the argument, that this conflating was officially carried out around the year 300 A.D., history has left not the slightest trace. This historical blank has led modern scholars to speak of the "lengthening" of the Received Text in terms of a "process which occurred over a considerable time, possibly centuries." Yet how such a process-again unnoticed by history carried out by many scribes, over centuries, across a vast geographic area, could achieve the widespread uniformity so apparent in the Received Text manuscripts is beyond imagination.

Six. "The distinctive Received Text readings (i.e. those we have underlined in the lists) are not generally seen before 35 A.D. For the most part they are absent from the Greek manuscripts, Versions, and Scripture quotations of the Church Fathers."

For a full discussion see the author's "Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version."

But, to summarize the following may be said.

1. The Greek Manuscripts

Clearly, Christians through the centuries believed that the longer text was very old, and that it accurately reflected the original, for they continually multiplied copies of it. This they most certainly would not have done had they felt it was merely a secondary and conflated revision. Nevertheless, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and some of the papyri portions which have survived for over 1650 years often exhibit the shorter text.

Let it be pointed out first that to expect a manuscript to hold up under the copying process for 1650 years is of course to expect the impossible. It is abundantly clear that these few manuscripts endured precisely because they were not so used. Where are the copies? Further, coming as they do from Egypt, they had the benefit of being stored in a dry climate which greatly contributed to their preservation.

There is, however, clear evidence for the longer TR readings in these few very

early relics. Harry A. Sturz in his book "The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism" strikes a devastating blow at arguments which seek to minimize the fact that distinctive Byzantine readings do appear in the early papyri. He lists 150 Received Text readings which though not supported by the early Alexandrian and Western manuscripts are read by the mass of later manuscripts and by the early papyri. He lists a further 170 TR readings which again run counter to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but in this case find support from the Western manuscripts. These also are supported in the early papyri. In fact Sturz demonstrates papyri support for a total of 839 readings which in varying degrees would be classed as "distinctly Byzantine." As the papyri is available for only 30% of the New Testament, existing evidence allows us to reasonably project that the story would be the same for the rest of the New Testament. What is especially remarkable about this is, the papyri comes from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. Nearly all of the 267 uncial manuscripts move strongly to the side of the AV Text, with the same being true of the minuscules.

2. The Early Versions

The early versions, i.e. where Greek was translated into another language, strongly support the Received Text, both before and after 350 A.D. The three primary versions are the Old Latin, Syriac Peshitta, and Egyptian Coptic. The two former were translated about 150 A.D. and the Coptic about 200 A.D. As might be expected existing manuscripts of the Coptic lean toward the Alexandrian/shorter text. Yet, in a significant number of places the Coptic is found to agree with the Received Text against Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

The Old Latin

One view of the origin of the Old Latin is that it was translated in Antioch, Syria, by missionaries to the West. Support for this view is demonstrated by the strong Syrian and Aramaic tendencies in the existing manuscripts. If this is the case then the Old Latin is associated with that city which was not only the missionary center in the Book of Acts, but also the place that history accords as the fountainhead of the Received Text.

The 65 or so existing manuscripts often disagree among themselves and are probably not very good reflections of the original Old Latin text. Those associated with North Africa show some strange additions as well as subtractions. Whereas, the manuscripts connected with Europe are generally favourable to the Received text. It is this African strain of the old Latin that is often termed "the Western text type." One thing is certain; the Old Latin whether European or African does not give much support to the Alexandrian/Modern Version text!

It is the branch of the Old Latin used in northern Italy that attracts our interest most, and establishes one of the crucial chapters in Bible transmission history. This version, known as the Itala, is associated with the Christians of the Vaudois-the valleys of northern Italy and southern France. These noble believers withstood every attempt of Rome to "bring them into the fold." From the days of Pope

Sylvester (early 300's) unto the massacres of 1655, they were slaughtered, their name blackened, and their records destroyed; yet they remained true to the Scriptures. They are known by a number of names, but best as the Waldensians. Research into the text and history of the Waldensian Bible has shown that it is a lineal descendant of the Old Latin Itala. In other words, the Itala has come down to us in the Waldensian form, and is firmly in the Received Text tradition. The same can be said of other Bibles belonging to those groups who remained separate from Rome. Thus, in the Received Text we have the convergence of the Greek speaking East and the non-Catholic Latin-speaking West.

The Syriac Peshitta

Coming now to the third primary version, the Syriac Peshitta, we have a curious case of textual history being rewritten. From the days of Westcott and Hort and the establishing of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus as the basis of the new Bibles, every attempt has been made to discredit all pre 350 A.D. evidence for the Received Text. This is nowhere more apparent than with the famous Syriac Peshitta.

The importance of this version and the church it came from cannot be overemphasized. The virtual center of first century Christianity was Antioch in Syria. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:20). Paul's great church planting ministries had their base in Antioch. Syrian Christianity had a close proximity and linkage with many of the churches that had received the inspired New Testament letters. The Syrian church had direct contact with the Apostles and writers of the Scriptures, therefore, the Syrian version may have been written with direct access to the original autographs. Indeed, Bishop Elliott in 1870 wrote, "It is no stretch of imagination to suppose that portions of the Peshitta might have been in the hands of St. John."

Now, in the years following 1870 the good bishop must have bit his tongue for so openly stating this commonly held view concerning the near apostolic age of the Peshitta. For in the movement to bring out a revised Bible, in which he himself played a leading role, the Peshitta posed a major stumbling block. Its manuscripts (now numbering over 259) are in line with the Received Text! Thus, practically by itself the Peshitta could undermine the entire Westcott and Hort superstructure. The answer was to take two other Syriac manuscripts (one discovered in 1842, the other in 1892) which differed from the Peshitta, and call them the "Old Syriac." The Peshitta was then made to be a revision of this so-called Old Syriac. To make the story complete, the Peshitta's date was moved back from 150 to about 425 A.D., with the "revision" being performed by a certain Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa in Syria.

Needless to say, there is not a trace in Syrian ecclesiastical history of such a thing happening. As Arthur Voobus writes "this kind of reconstruction of textual history is pure fiction without a shred of evidence to support it" (*Early Versions of the New Testament*, Estonian Theological Society, 1954, see pp. 90-97). Further, the view is contrary to established facts of history. In Rabbula's day a massive split occurred in the Syrian Church. The opposing sides were known as the Nestorians and Monophysites (led by Rabbula). Yet, both sides regarded the Peshitta as their

authoritative Bible. It is impossible to believe that the side bitterly opposed to Rabbula should at the same time embrace unanimously his "revision" of the Scriptures. Further, such a unanimous acceptance by both parties in the early 400's argues powerfully for the Peshitta's early origin.

Regarding the two sole manuscripts of the so-called Old Syrian text. They are not all that close to each other. One denies the virgin birth of Christ in Matthew 1:16. Nor do they lend particularly convincing support to the Alexandrian Text ' In fact, they contain a significant number of Received Text readings. They are merely corrupted copies, all but ignored by the Syrian church, yet with the Received Text base still discernible.

The other European versions-the Gothic (350 A.D.), Armenian (early 400's), and Georgian (mid-400's)-follow the Received Text. Even the Ethiopic (400), despite its proximity to Egypt, is basically Received Text. Therefore, in the early versional history support for the Received Text, in contrast with the Alexandrian Text, is overwhelming.

3. The Scripture Quotations of the Early Church Writers

Westcott and Hort confidently declared that ecclesiastical writers before 350 A.D. did not quote from the longer type of text. Their confidence rested in part on what is an immediate disadvantage for the Received Text. Most early writers (or at least those whose writings exist now) were located near those areas where the shorter text was prevalent (Alexandria), and where most divergences have been noted in the manuscripts-(North Africa and the West).

In this entire inquiry it cannot be overstressed that in early textual history the Received Text is most directly associated with those places that were either the senders or recipients of the original New Testament autographs, i.e. Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia. While volumes of theological literature poured out of Alexandria, North Africa and Italy, very little is available for us prior to 350 from the eastern areas. Yet even with this disadvantage, the Received Text can be shown to prevail in the Alexandrian/Western writings.

Toward the end of last century John Burgon compiled an extensive index of Scripture quotations from the early Church Fathers. In mentioning Burgon we come to the man who so powerfully and eloquently fought against moves in England to replace the Received Text. Attempts have been made to discredit this good man's massive labours. It certainly cannot be done on the basis of his scholarship. After matriculating at Oxford with honours and taking his B.A. and M.A. there, he was to spend most of his adult life at that famous university. Burgon was Fellow of Oriel College, vicar of St. Mary's (the University Church) and Gresham Professor of Divinity. During his last twelve years he was Dean of Chichester. Unlike many of his contemporaries his was a "scholarship on fire." He believed and loved the Bible, and had a great zeal to defend it. While we cannot go along with his high churchmanship, we acknowledge him as a worthy champion of the Faith, and strongly urge the reading of his books.

Coming now to the index, Burgon cited 4,383 Scripture quotations from 76 writers

who died before the year 400 A.D. Edward Miller carried on the work after Burgon's death and put the material in a tabulated form showing the times a Church Father witnesses for and against the Received Text. He found the Received Text had the greater support by 2,630 to 1,753 or 3 to 2. Keeping in mind the Alexandrian and Western localities of these 76 Fathers, we have here quite a strong majority for the Received Text. Had the quotations of the Eastern Fathers been available, all indications are that the support would have been quite overwhelming. But the above evidence shows clearly also that there was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries. But, there was a clear winner!

Miller concluded his research with the following challenge:

As far as the Fathers who died before 400 A.D. are concerned, the question may now be put and answered. Do they witness to the Traditional Text as existing from the first, or do they not? The results of the evidence, both as regards the quantity and the quality of the testimony, enable us to reply, not only that the traditional Text was in existence, but that it was predominant, during the period under review. Let any one who disputes this conclusion make out for the Western text, or the Alexandrian, or for the Text of B and Aleph (i.e. Vaticanus, Sinaiticus), a case from the evidence of the Fathers which can equal or surpass that which has been now placed before our reader.

Regarding the attempt to discredit Burgon's work by saying that later editors "adapted" the Church Father's quotations to the Traditional Text, Edward Hills writes:

In regard to my references to the Church Fathers, I am sure that if you examine the notes to my *King James Defended and my Believing Bible Study?* you will see that I have taken care to look up all the Burgon's references in the most modern editions available. During the years 1950-55, I spent many weeks at this task... In fact, the newer German editions of the Church Fathers differ little from those of the 17th and 18th centuries. Certainly not enough to affect Burgon's arguments (Letter from Edward F Hills to Theodore P. Letis, February 15, 1980, as quoted in Theodore P Letis, "Edward Freer Hills Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text," unpublished M.T.S. Thesis, Emory University, 1987).

Seven: "There are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for doctrinal purposes during the early centuries."

Such a view allowed Hort to treat the text of Scriptures as he would any other work of ancient literature (see point one). If he admitted that there had been a significant attack with fairly wide spread results then he would not (or only with greatest difficulty) have been able to introduce his other theories of genealogy, conflation, official revision, and text types. An unpredictable variable would have been introduced which these neatly packaged theories could not have handled. Textual Criticism approaches the history of the Bible much in the same way an evolutionist does the history of the planet: no direct reaction, no flood, all has been left to natural processes, no direct intervention of any kind!

In the face of widespread testimony of early Church Fathers to the contrary, it is hard to believe that Westcott and Hort were ever very serious about this point. But, the tenet had to be accepted if the rest of the theory was to have a chance of standing.

Tertullian of Carthage is typical of many early Fathers. He accused heretics of tampering with the Scriptures in order to gain support for their special views.

Around the year 208 A.D. he urged these men to compare their copies with those in the cities where the Originals had been sent. Tertullian may actually be referring to the original autographs of the Epistles of Paul, but if not they were most certainly first generation copies.

"Run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still preeminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read. Achaia is very near you, in which you find Corinth. Since you are not far from Macedonia you have Philippi... and the Thessalonians. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get Ephesus. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have Rome, from which there come even into our hands the very authority of the apostles themselves."

When the ***Living Word***, the Lord Jesus Christ, returned to heaven Satan directed his fury against the ***Written Word***. This is the key to understanding the history of the New Testament text. Any theory not taking this into account is totally adrift.

We are faced with the most direct question. Is the longer or the shorter text the offspring of these attempts at corruption? Did the 100 year period when deliberate alteration took place produce the text which more fully presents the Names, Person, and Work of Christ or the one which tends to diminish them? Which would be more likely: a believer adding to the Scriptures, or an enemy of the Faith deleting from the Scriptures? Which would be easier and less liable to immediate detection: adding words and phrases or removing them? Which could be more consistently and uniformly done? And which of these two kinds of text did believers through the centuries feel convinced to be the right one, and demonstrate their conviction by multiplying copies?

By now, you probably know the answer!

Eight: "The shorter reading is to be preferred. Corruption by addition is much more likely than corruption by omission."

This is clearly a case of devising a theory to fit the shorter Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts. As with the other theories it has no real basis in fact. Regarding deliberate alteration, it is far easier to remove a word or passage and get away with it (for a while!), than to add material. And when there is no particular attempt to editorialize, constant copying will result in accidental omission far more often than accidental addition.

But apart from the omission of significant words and passages, the Modern Version Text is shorter in another kind of way. It is more terse and not as lucid as the Received Text. And here it betrays the secret that it is not the original text of the first century, but rather one that is altered and secondary.

In Biblical times there were two major kinds of Greek dialect: Classical or Attic (the dialect of Athens on the Attica Peninsula), and Hellenistic or Koine. Though terse and compact, Attic was considered the more "elegant" of the two. It was the language of the golden age of Greece, and was in vogue from about 480 to 323 B.C. After Alexander the Great, the more simple and explicit *Koine* (meaning

common dialect) began to be spoken, and became the lingua franca of the eastern Mediterranean region until the fourth century A.D. when it was superseded by Byzantine Greek.

Importantly for us, Koine was the dialect of the New Testament. This is a remarkable evidence of God's providence. The Attic left too much to the imagination, whereas Koine with its greater fullness could be more precise. It was simple, lucid, plain, and full; yet without the affected pretense of the Attic.

As time passed there were attempts to return the Attic to its former place. The second century A.D. was known as the "century of Atticism" when many did revert back to the Attic brevity. And as it was an occasion for attack against the Scriptures that they were written in the less cultured Koine, a significant number of "Christian" scholars were caught up in this. As we might expect, signs point to Alexandria being the prime mover to bring the Scripture Text into line with the Attic dialect. The manuscripts associated with that locality, certainly beyond all others, favour the Attic-like terseness.

When Westcott and Hort convinced textual scholarship to revise the N.T. away from the Received Text and toward Vaticanus and Sinaiticus; the implications of Attic and Koine Greek were not fully understood. Classical brevity was to them an attraction. Subsequent research has shown how wrong they were: the shorter, not the longer, is the altered text!

A Preconceived Malice

This then, with a few other arguments of a more secondary nature, is the Westcott and Hort (mainly Hort) theory which has resulted in the shorter New Testament of our day. These are the standard arguments against the Text of the King James Version. They are not fair. They are not honest. They do not deal with the actual facts of the case. Much of the argument was tailor-made by Fenton John Anthony Hort to support his own preconceived malice against the standard text.

Ponder what he wrote to a friend in 1851 when only twenty-three years old:

I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on with the villainous Textus Receptus...Think of that vile Textus Receptus leaning entirely on late manuscripts; it is a blessing there are such early ones (*Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, 1896, Vol 1, p. 211).

Even granting his misconception about "late manuscripts," what would make a young man call the Text of the Reformation which had brought such light to the world, "villainous and vile"? Regardless, with this opening salvo he launched into a career dedicated to the overthrow of the Received Text.

Ernest Colwell wrote:

The dead hand of Fenton John Anthony Hort lies heavy upon us. In the early years of this century Kirsopp Lake described Hort's work as a failure, though a glorious one. But Hort did not fail to reach his major goal. He dethroned the Textus Receptus (*Scribal Habits in Early Papyri, The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, Abingdon, 1965, p. 370)

One Final Argument

So, we have a very curious thing today, the shorter Alexandrian text is being circulated more widely than at any time in history largely through a "glorious failure"! The producers of the Modern Bibles have chosen it rather than the Received Text as their base. Now frankly, we can be thankful for this as it places the issues in sharper contrast. It may well be that God has prevented the text He has honoured and blessed from being the base of this endless succession of modern translations! Yet, in view of such a wholesale discrediting of their textual theory, what justification do they offer for continued use of the shorter text?

To a large extent we are now dealing with expediency rather than an honest evaluation of the evidence. The publishing houses have invested (and made!) huge sums in the Modern Versions. The NIV is now beginning to outsell the Authorized Version. Almost all of the world's Bible Societies use the shorter text for their foreign language translations. It is entrenched in practically all theological colleges. And despite its proven fallacy there is simply not the will to upset the status quo. Nevertheless, they must be able to offer some reasonable justification for its use. They may merely try to repeat the old arguments, or raise some secondary points; but as far as factual evidence they have very little to offer for their case. Recently they have come up with an argument which does not offer any positive support for the shorter text but is more of a reaction against what they know only too well to be the considerable evidence for the text found in the vast majority of manuscripts.

Gordon D. Fee of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts has been at the forefront in seeking to dampen down popular support for the Received Text. He makes the following point:

... But the question still must be answered: How does one account for its dominance and general uniformity? ... How did the Byzantine text become dominant? ... The most important factor for the dominance and general uniformity of the Byzantine text... By the end of the seventh century the Greek NT was being transmitted in a very narrow sector of the church viz., the Greek Orthodox Church with its dominant patriarchate in Constantinople. By the time of Chalcedon (the famous council of 451 A.D.) Greek is almost unknown in the west, and after Chalcedon the decline of Alexandria and the subsequent rise of Islam narrow Greek speaking Christendom still further ("Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, March 1978, pp. 29, 30).

It is now being argued that the reason for the scarcity of manuscripts with the shorter text is due merely to the fact that they are associated with areas which ceased to speak Greek. This has become something of a last ditch defence for the Alexandrian Text in the face of its paucity of manuscript evidence.

The argument is not valid:

1. At issue here is the shorter text of Alexandria, not that of the West generally. The argument tends to give an impression that the scarcity of Alexandrian manuscripts is due to Greek usage dying out in the West. Alexandria, of course, is not the West.
2. The Alexandrian Text is precisely what the term implies-the local text of Alexandria! There is little evidence that it spread beyond Egypt. It made no impact

on the West or East, neither in Greek, Latin, or the other versional languages.

3. The Moslem conquest of Alexandria did not take place until A.D. 642. And though the Muslims restricted evangelism, they did not attempt to exterminate Christianity, or compel Christians to convert. Nor does there seem to be evidence that the Muslims halted manuscript transmission in the areas they conquered. Therefore, many centuries were available for the Alexandrian Text to proliferate and establish itself. But it did not! Not only did it fail to make an impression on the surrounding regions, but if surviving manuscripts are anything to go by it also lost favor on its own home base. This is demonstrated by the fact that the very few manuscripts which display this kind of text often do so only in a portion of their contents. Also one of its two primary representatives, Sinaiticus, has hundreds of scribal alterations made at the time of its production which move back toward the Traditional Text by a five to two margin!

These then are the arguments that have been used against the text of the King James Bible. The case cannot be sustained. The theory breaks down at every point, and serves only to highlight the formidable strength of the Bible we hold dear.

A Fearful Warning

That this issue of missing words and passages is more than mere academic wrangling, but has in fact eternal implications is made plain by the Bible's final warning.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.-And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18, 19).

This warning in the first instance refers to the Book of Revelation. But, it is the Book of Revelation in its position as the capstone of Scripture. This seems evident as warnings of this kind are not found at the end of any of the other sixty-five books of the Bible. That modern Bible translators do not take it seriously does not diminish its force and fulfillment one bit.

VII. ANTIOCH OR ALEXANDRIA

There is one point upon which both sides of the current debate agree: the early transmissional history of the New Testament is a "tale of two cities", Antioch and Alexandria. And just as surely as the KJV Text was woven into the spiritual life of Antioch in Syria, so was also the Modern Version Text in Alexandria. Today a believer must decide whether he is more comfortable with a Bible whose roots go back to one or the other of these two cities. The choice is a clear one, as there is very little common ground between them.

Certainly Antioch has by far the more glorious Biblical heritage. It became to the Gentile Christians what Jerusalem had been to the Jews, and superseded Jerusalem as the base for the spread of the Gospel. The "disciples were called Christians first

in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). It was the starting point for the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys. Mark, Barnabas, and Silas were there; as was Peter and probably Luke. The Book of Acts leaves us with no doubt that Antioch was the centre of early church activity.

Egypt shares no such glory. It has always been looked upon as a symbol of the world-system which is opposed to the things of God. God would not allow His Son (Mt. 2), His nation (Ex. 12), His patriarchs (Gen. 50), or even the bones of the patriarchs (Ex. 13:19) to remain there. The Jews were warned repeatedly not to return to Egypt, not to rely upon it for help, not to even purchase horses there, etc. Thus, in contrast to what is being claimed today, it is hard to believe that Egypt and Alexandria would have been the central place where God would preserve His Holy Word. Frankly, it was the last place on earth that one could trust in doctrinal and biblical matters. It certainly wasn't safe to get a Bible there!

Even Bruce Metzger, a supporter of the Alexandrian Text, is compelled to catalogue the vast amount of religious corruption which came from Alexandria:

Among Christians which during the second century either originated in Egypt or circulated there among both the orthodox and the Gnostics are numerous apocryphal gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses. Some of the more noteworthy are the Gospel according to the Egyptians, the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Kerygma of Peter, the Acts of John, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse of Peter. There are also fragments of exegetical and dogmatic works composed by Alexandrian Christians, chiefly Gnostics during the second century. We know, for example, of such teachers as Basilides and his son Isidore, and of Valentinus, Ptolemaeus, Heracleon, and Pantaenus. All but the last-mentioned were unorthodox in one respect or another. In fact, to judge by the comments made by Clement of Alexandria, almost every deviant Christian sect was represented in Egypt during the second century; Clement mentions the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Marcionites, the Peratae, the Encratites, the Docetists, the Haimetites, the Cainites, the Ophites, the Simonians, and the Eutychites. What proportion of Christians in Egypt during the second century were orthodox is not known (*The Early Versions of the New Testament*, Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 101).

Let it be said again: Alexandria was the worst possible place to go for a Bible! Yet it is precisely the place that our present-day translators have gone in gathering the major sources of the modern Bible.

VIII. TIMELESS OR TIME-BOUND

Translators of the Authorized Version and the other great Bibles believed that the Scriptures unfold absolute truth which transcended time and culture. Though the events and discourses of Scripture take place in a long ago age, and in a civilization different from our own; by the working of the Holy Spirit it speaks directly to the heart in all cultures and times. That this is so is demonstrated by man's common union in the fall of Adam (Rom. 5:12) and his need of the One Saviour (Acts 4:12). This two-fold unity overrides any considerations of time and culture.

There may have been the need for certain normal adjustments, but there was never a question of translating the Bible any other way than the way God gave it. It was also acknowledged by translators that there were many deep things in the Bible which could not be translated simple enough for "modern man" to understand at

first reading. And any such attempt would "translate" the meaning away! Thus, this idea of bringing the Bible "down to the people" had definite limits.

With the advent of Eugene A. Nida and his widely accepted "Dynamic Equivalence Theory" this has all changed. According to him the message and events of Scripture are "bound in their ancient time and culture." By merely using the "static" equivalence method of translation-that is, a word for word translation-the message of the Bible remains bound as far as modern man is concerned. But when the principles of "dynamic" equivalence are applied the message will naturally "leap out" at him into his own day and surroundings (or so Nida would like us to think).

Nida says that formerly there was a one-sided regard for the message, but today the emphasis should be on how the message is connected with its receptor (the certain people to whom the message is sent). Thus, the translator must consider more than just the differences between two languages; he must consider the cultural differences between the past and present. If (to use Nida's example) the people of Jacob's day understood his wrestling with the angel in a literal sense, the people of this day probably would not. Therefore, the translator should, to a certain extent, adapt and translate Genesis 32 "psychoanalytically or mythologically."

It becomes apparent that in dynamic equivalency a great deal of liberty can be taken with the events and discourses of Scripture so long as the translator "gets the message across."

Speaking in irony of this new method, missionary director Dan Truax writes: "Admittedly, the readers in the jungles of Brazil would understand Isaiah 1:18 better with the "corn flour" substitution. The "corn flour translation" would read as follows:

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as 'corn flour.'" But consider the dilemma of those translators when they came to certain Bible verses into which "corn flour" in the place of "snow" would not fit "He ... stew a lion in a pit in a snowy [corn flour?] day" (1 Chronicles 11:22) or; "For as the rain cometh down and the snow [corn flour?] from heaven..." (Isaiah 55:10).

What happened to the old practice of translating the Bible as it was, and then explaining concepts that were strange to the readers? (from B.I.M.I. *World*).

There is a limit as to how far the advocates of Dynamic Equivalency will go. Obviously, if the translation becomes too radical it will not be accepted. "The cultural adaptation must not totally enter the translation. At the same time, they are convinced that cultural adaptation is necessary." Therefore, they speak of the church as a "transformer of the truth" which completes the process began by the translator. Thus if the translator cannot convey that Jacob wrestling with the angel was really a "psychological struggle," the church and preacher should make that supposedly divine truth known!

Virtually all recent translations and the Bible Societies' work generally has been to a large extent influenced by Dynamic Equivalence. It has made Eugene Nida the most influential person in the field. The theory is grounded in theological

liberalism. It strips the Bible of its doctrinal content. It dishonours God by implying He is unable to speak absolutely to all generations and cultures. And to quote the verdict that a literary critic gave the New International Version, it makes the Bible "formica flat."

That the New International Version was influenced by Dynamic Equivalence is demonstrated by the following statement in its preface:

Because for most readers today the phrase "the LORD of hosts" and "God of hosts" have little meaning, this version renders them "The LORD Almighty and God Almighty" (p. ix).

Thus, they have confounded LORD of hosts with El Shaddai: (God Almighty)!

It is not only the underlying text which is at fault in the modern versions, the translations itself is seriously defective. Thankfully you'll not have to worry about either when you meditate in the pages of the King James Bible.

For an excellent (to whom I am indebted for the above), see *The Future of the Bible* by Jakob van Bruggen, Nelson Publishers.

IX. THE NIV OR THE AV ENGLISH

English is the closest thing there is today to a universal language. Upwards of 350 million speak it as their first language, with many more than that using it as a second language. It has the largest vocabulary of any language (550,000 separate entries in Webster's *Third New International Dictionary*). English has become the diplomatic language of the United States, and the standard language of science, technology, business and communications. It has been the primary medium through which the Word of God has spread during these last centuries of church history. Before giving several reasons why the English of 1611 was better suited as a vehicle for divine revelation, let us note briefly the preparations which led to the AV's translation.

The Authorized Version was the culmination of some 100 years of preparation. There was intensive study of the Greek Text (not to mention Hebrew). The five Greek editions of Erasmus, the four of Stephanus, the nine of Beza provided the translators with a refined text, representative of that which was in the majority of manuscripts, and had been acknowledged (John 16:13) by God's people through the centuries. There were no fewer than seven "preparatory" English translations: Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthews, Great, Taverners, Geneva, and Bishops. The AV translators themselves were men of unparalleled scholarship, representing the combined intellectual might of Oxford and Cambridge. But far more importantly, they were marked by a holy awe and deep reverence for the Word of God. It is this latter that places them poles apart from the translating teams of today.

Coming back now to the English in which our Authorized Bible was written, it is an evidence of God's providence that after nearly four centuries, so little can be found to be archaic. Certainly there are "profound differences" between current and Elizabethan English. But, the AV is not Elizabethan English! As a comparison will show, there is a great difference between AV English and the wordy, affectations Elizabethan style.

Far from our Bible being a product of that day's literary style, the English language after 1611 owes its development to the Authorized Version! "The King James Version was a landmark in the development of English prose. Its elegant yet natural style had enormous influence on English-speaking writers" (*World Book Encyclopedia*). This partially explains why the AV is ever fresh and lucid while most else from that period is quite difficult to read.

Edward F. Hills speaks on the misconception that the English of the AV is Elizabethan:

The English of the King James Version is not the English of the early 17th century. To be exact, it is not a type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. It is biblical English, which was not used on ordinary occasions even by the translators who produced the King James Version. As H. Wheeler Robinson (1940) pointed out, one need only compare the preface written by the translators with the text of their translation to feel the difference in style. And the observations of W.A. Irwin (1952) are to the same purport. The King James Version, he reminds us, owes its merit, not to 17th-century English - which was very difficult - but to its faithful translation of the original. Its style is that of the Hebrew and of the New Testament Greek. Even in their use of thee and thou the translators were not following 17th-century English usage but biblical usage, for at the time these translators were doing their work these singular forms had already been replaced by the plural you in polite conversation (*The King James Version Defended*, Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984, pp. 218).

In 1604 when James I authorized preparations for a new English version of the Bible, a watershed was reached not only in the history of Bible translation, but of the history of the English language itself.

X. PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE PRESERVATION

One hundred years ago John Burgon wrote: "If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages."

This is the crux of the matter; does God preserve that Word which He originally inspired? And if so, to what extent? Is it merely the concepts and basic message that is kept intact; or does preservation, as inspiration, extend to the words themselves?

That the Bible declares both the fact and extent of its preservation is made abundantly clear in the following:

"Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD" (2 Kings 10:10).

"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:6, 7).

"For the LORD is good, his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven " (Psalm 119:89).

"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it" (Psalm 119:140).

"Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for

ever" (Psalm 119:152).

"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Psalm 119:160).

"Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5).

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isaiah 40:8).

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17).

"The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23).

"But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (I Peter 1:25).

We have a strange anomaly today; Christians claim to believe what the Bible says about its own inspiration but virtually ignore the equally direct statements concerning preservation. To say that you believe in the full inspiration of Scripture while at the same time accepting the textual theories inherent in the modern versions, is about as incongruous as taking Genesis one literally while holding to the theories of Darwin.

One: The Starting Point of Apostasy

The questioning of the Bible's preservation is the starting point of all other kinds of apostasy. Satan in Genesis 3 did not begin his attack by questioning whether there was a God, or whether God created, or whether the doctrine of the Trinity is true. Nor did it begin with the question of whether God's Word was inspired in the originals. Apostasy began when Satan asked Eve, "Yea hath God said"? "Eve, are you certain that you presently have a full recollection of what God said"? When doubt was given a bridgehead at this point, the other defenses soon fell. The same principles applies today: Has God preserved His word and kept intact His original word of inspiration or has He not? It is a fact, that the one common denominator in all the varied errors, deviations, and heresies is that their advocates will first criticize the standard received edition or translation of Scripture.

Two: Preservation Must Be Approached in an Attitude of Faith

Like all other Bible truths, the Scripture's teaching on its own preservation is to be in the first instance accepted by faith. Edward F. Hills in his book, *The King James*

Version Defended calls it "the logic of faith." The facts and evidence of such preservation will then follow.

Three: Preservation is Grounded in the Eternal Counsels of God

The Bible's preservation is rooted in the eternal counsels of God. The Scriptures are as eternal as God Himself.

"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

Four: Preservation is Brought to Pass Through the Priesthood of Believers

The Old Testament text was preserved by the Aaronic priests and the scribes who grouped around them. *"Unto them were committed the oracles of God"* (Romans 3:2).

In the New Testament dispensation every believer is a priest under Christ. Hence, the NT text has been preserved by faithful Christians in every walk of *life*.

"Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

It was not the pronouncements of church fathers or counsels that determined the text and canon of the New Testament. Rather, the Holy Spirit guided His own into the acceptance of the true word of God. Such copies proliferated, while defective ones were ignored. The Holy Spirit continues this work today in the questions that arise over the wording in the modern versions.

Five: Preservation Extends to the Actual Words

Preservation has to do with the actual words of Scripture, not merely the general teaching or concepts. This is made clear in the list of verses just given. Advocates of the modern versions commonly say: "There is not a single doctrine missing." But what they fail to tell you is that the words which support and develop these doctrines are frequently missing. Thus, the force of the doctrine is diminished. As inspiration of the Scriptures is verbal so also preservation must be verbal.

Six: Preservation is Operative in the Spread of the Scriptures

Preservation has taken place in the diffusion of God's word, not in its being hidden or stored. Stewart Custer in seeking to somehow equate the use of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus with the doctrine of preservation said: "God has preserved His word in the sands of Egypt" (stated in a debate at the Marquette Manor Baptist Church in Chicago, 1984).

To take such a position, would mean that believers have had the wrong text for 1800 years, and it has been only with the advent of two liberal British churchmen, and the retrieval of two disused Alexandrian manuscripts that we now have the "true preserved" word of God. No! The miracle of preservation was operative while the Scriptures were being disseminated. *"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it"* (Psalm 68:1 1). *"Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the*

world" (Romans 10: 18).

Seven: Preservation Must of Necessity Apply to Key Translations

As so few can read the original languages, God's promise to preserve His Word has no practical relevance if it does not extend to translations. The Scripture frequently affirms **"...that we are born again by the Word of God"** (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Peter 1:23). If a translation cannot be equated with the actual Word of God, then ultimately this leads to the situation that one must know Hebrew and Greek before they can be saved, or built up in the faith (Romans 10: 17; Matthew 4:4). Further, the Bible's use of the term "preserved" demonstrates that it is an absolute and not a relative term. To speak of the Bible, or in this discussion, a translation as being "almost preserved" is a misnomer. Either it is preserved or it isn't, either it has errors or it doesn't. Either the flower fades and the grass withers or it does not.

Eight: The Meaning of the Term "Scripture"

While it may be assumed that the Bible usage of the word "Scripture" has reference to the original autographs; yet virtually each time the word is used it is the copies or even translations of the Scriptures that are in view, e.g. it is the copies of the Scriptures that the people had access to. Note the following examples:

"...I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth"(Dan. 10:2 1).

"...Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures" (Matt. 22:29).

"...This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:2 1).

"...He expounded unto them in all the scriptures..." (Luke 24:27).

"...And while he opened to us the scriptures" (Luke 24:32).

"...That they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

"...They believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (Jn. 2:22).

"...Search the scriptures..." (Jn. 5:39).

"... The scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35).

"...The place of the scripture which he read.. " (Acts 8:32).

"...And began at the same scripture and preached..." (Acts 8:35).

"...Reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (Acts 17:2).

"...That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures..." (2 Tim. 3:15).

"...All scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Tim. 3:16).

The above shows clearly that the word "scriptures" refers to what the people had access to, what was at hand, what was current, what they could then actually read and hear. Therefore, the Biblical usage of the word refers primarily to copies rather than the original autographs.

The fact that these copies and possibly even translations are called "scripture"

strongly implies their preservation, and that the very qualities of the inspired original have been brought over into them:

These copies are holy (2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 1:2).

These copies are true (Dan. 10:21).

These copies are not broken (Jn. 10:35).

These copies are worthy of belief (Jn. 2:22).

The prophecies contained in these copies have been fulfilled to the very letter and await fulfillment (Luke 4:21).

These copies are the very voice of God. This can be illustrated by a comparison of the following: Exodus 9:13-16 with Romans 9:17; Genesis 12:1-3 with Galatians 3:8; Genesis 21:10 with Galatians 4:30.

These verses establish the fact that there is no difference between the scriptures speaking and God speaking. And as the scriptures refer to that which is current and available, it follows that our copies are as much the voice of God as the original was.

Consider also that classic passage on inspiration:

"And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.- that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. " -(2 Tim. 3:15-17)

There are some remarkable things about this passage that are often overlooked. The words "is given by inspiration of God" are translated from the one Greek word, "*theopneustos*" (God-breathed), and "is profitable" is from "*Ophelimos*." These two words are joined by the conjunction "*kai*." Thus, all scripture (*graphe*) is said to be "God-breathed and profitable." Therefore, while the Scriptures were inspired in the past and their profitability has to do with the present, yet both facts are joined together in an identical grammatical construction. Thus, it is the work of past inspiration which makes the Scriptures profitable in the present. And conversely, the Scriptures cannot be profitable in the present if the manifold blessings of inspiration have not been preserved. **Past inspiration is inseparably linked to present profitability.**

Nine: The Bearing of John 16:13 upon the Translation and Preservation Process

Translation and Preservation Process

Translation and Preservation Process

Translation and Preservation Process

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). God has promised to guide His people into all truth. "All" here does not mean "basically," "generally," "almost," "nearly,"

"relatively." It must surely mean ALL! "Truth" is defined in the next chapter of John as referring to the Bible. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (Jn. 17:17).

Through the priesthood of believers, God guided His people into all truth as to the canon of Scripture, e.g. which books were and were not inspired. He also guided them into all truth as to the text of Scripture (which were and were not the correct readings). And in order to make this relevant and practical he must also guide them into all truth concerning the translation of Scripture. Three important things can be seen in John 16:13:

- 1. The Guide-"the Spirit of Truth"**
- 2. The Journey-"will guide you"**
- 3. The Arrival-"into all truth"**

The history of how our Bible came down to us after its inspiration in the original autographs is to be found under these three points. These must be considered in the history of every Bible of every language.

The Guide-

The same Holy Spirit of Truth who verbally inspired the Word in the autographs is committed also to its verbal preservation in the textual, transmissional, and translation process.

The Journey-

The statement "will guide you" indicates that a process is in view. In the history of a given Bible where God was actively guiding there will be at least three key periods:

- 1. The Manuscript Period**
- 2. The Early Printed Edition Period**
- 3. The Period of an Authoritative Standard Edition**

In each of these periods God's Word will be current and available to His people.

"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart that thou mayest do it" (Deut. 30:14).

In the first two periods God's Word may not have been available from the same written source. Relatively minor variations existed in the hand copied manuscripts of the Received Text tradition. The early printed Greek texts of Erasmus, Stephanus and Beza had some variation, as did the early printed English versions. Yet, God's promise of guiding into all truth could still be counted and through the comparing of several sources He would put upon the heart of his people which of the variants was the true reading.

For example, Wycliffe's Bible was based on the Latin Vulgate in those remote and primitive areas where only a preliminary translation was available. The earnest seeker of truth can know what a true reading is, for God has promised to "guide into all truth." There is, however, the disadvantage today that many missionary

Bibles are based on the Alexandrian text.

The Arrival-

If "will guide you" refers to the process or journey; then "into all truth" must refer to the arrival at a destination. This destination refers to that point when a given language receives an authoritative standardized Bible accepted over a considerable period of time by the great mass of believers. By any criterion the publication of the King James Version in that language which is most used in international communication is the single most important event in the transmissional history of Scripture.

Certainly here we see the Biblical principle of 1 Corinthians 13:10:

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. "

History has shown this version in its widespread appeal to tower above the other great standard versions of Europe. Even to this day it is the measuring rod against which all others are judged.

The King James version is the grand culmination of God's promise to guide His people into all truth. Our conviction that this pinnacle was reached in 1611 is enforced by the fact that since then textual scholarship has been rationalistic, has denied the inspiration of Scripture, and has moved in precisely the opposite direction.

Ten: Lifegiving Qualities in a Translation

Inspiration in the originals will not only ensure preservation in certain key translations, but also animation. It is this quality which enables a translation to convict the sinner and bring manifold grace to the believer (Hebrews 4:12; Acts 2:27; Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 119:9,11,130; Romans 10:17). It is this which ensures that a translation will become an enduring standard among the humble people of God. The Old Latin, Syriac Peshitta, Armenian, Georgian, Gothic, Slavonic, Luther, Tyndale, Geneva and King James are examples of versions which in a sweetly natural way worked their way into the hearts of millions of God's people. High pressured promotion was not needed as was the case for Constantine's Bible, the Latin Vulgate or the New International Version.

Thus, when a translation is being prepared in accordance with the will of God, the life giving breath of God will be felt in that translation. Modern versions claim to be the "results of the most recent scholarship," but there is no life in them and they will fall flat after a few years. Ponder the fate of the once very popular Living Bible!

God's work of preservation does more than keep the Bible from error in its transmission and translation, it gives to the Bible an enduring freshness. Therefore, a translation can be as much the Sword of the Spirit as the original autographs. When God is active in the work of a translation (and is there any reason to think that He would not be?), the manifold blessings of the once delivered work of inspiration are transmitted to that translation. Our standard translation is not a valley of dry bones, it has breath! To test this fact read John 14

in the New International Version and then in the Authorized Version.

"Guiding into all truth" is not secondary inspiration. It does, however, enable a translation upon which God's favour rests to be a completely accurate vehicle of His "once given" original work of inspiration.

Eleven: A Standard Translation Should Be Accepted as the Preserved Word of God

It is only God who can make a translation or version a true Standard. Such a Standard will endure the test of time, receive universal acceptance, and result in widespread conversion. Such a Standard will spawn and encourage the publication of vast amounts of supplemental literature: commentaries, concordances, theological works, study helps of all kinds. And such a Standard will evoke the wrath of Satan. Since its inception, the King James Version has been called "the paper pope of the Protestants!"

That the Authorized Version is such a Standard and the only Standard in the English language for nearly 400 years argues convincingly that it is God's preserved word in that language. In response to God's promises of preservation and the abundant evidence of the same, the believer may be fully confident that the AV has no blemishes and is without proven error. There are places that may need explanation, and it is right for the teacher within reasonable limits to amplify, elucidate and expound the English as well as the underlying text. But this must not be done in such away as to imply to the listener that errors exist. For example, "This word means..." is acceptable; but "A better rendering would be..." is not. Before being too concerned about the "force of the Greek or Hebrew," the reader should be certain that he has a grasp on "the force of the English!"

I say that the KJV is without "proven error" because I am not aware of errors having been proven! Given all that can be said in behalf of the King James Bible, the burden of proof must rest with the one making the charge. If he feels he has better understanding and spiritual insight at a given point than did the fifty AV translators not to mention the translators of the seven Bibles from Tyndale to the Bishops which prepared the groundwork of the AV-then he must set forth his evidence.

That this is not so easy can be seen from the following incident involving one of the AV translators:

Dr. Richard Kilby, the translator in the Old Testament group at Oxford, heard a young parson complain in an earnest sermon that a certain passage should read in a way he stated. After the sermon Dr. Kilby took the young man aside and told him that the group had discussed at length not only his proposed reading but thirteen others; only then had they decided on the phrasing as it appeared (Gustavis S. Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, Baker Book House, 1959, pp. 137,8).

A great amount of unnecessary harm has been done by "young parsons" (and older ones too!) who do this. Anyone who approaches a so-called problem passage in an attitude of honour towards God's Word will find the solution equally honouring. He

will find that God's promise of preservation has been vindicated.

Twelve: Will There Be Another Standard Bible?

It is not impossible that in the providence of God another universally accepted standard translation could be produced. However, given the lateness of the hour, the lack of spiritual scholarship, and the fact that our language no longer has the depth and vitality it once had, this seems most unlikely. All indications point to the KJV as the Bible God would have His people use in these last days before the Second Coming of Christ. God has preserved in the King James Version His original work of inspiration. The flower has not faded! The Sword is as sharp as in the day it was first whetted!

This book is available from the Fundamental Evangelistic Association. Click [here](#) to go to the ordering form / price list.

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